Mark 15:39 - Lenten Music – Mockery or Love – 03-19-1972



TRINITY CHARGE--THE UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST
Ralph C. Link, Pastor
Christ Church, Duncannon 9:00 A.M.
Trinity Church, New Bloomfield 10:30 A.M.

THE ORDER OF WORSHIP March 19, 1972

The Organ Prelude
*The Hymn of Praise 161
*The Call to Worship
*The Prayer of Confession (Unison)
Even as Christ set his face to go up to Jerusalem, so we would renew our discipleship and take up the cross and follow him. Help us to make the cross meaningful by putting right before self-interest, by putting our neighbors before ourselves, by putting principle above reputation, and by putting love of thee above love of self; through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.
*The Kyrie
*The Assurance of Pardon
The Scripture----Mark 15:21-39
*The Gloria Patri
The Anthem (Trinity)
The Pastoral Prayer
The Announcements
The Receiving of Tithes and Offerings
*The Doxology
*The Offering Prayer and Lord's Prayer
The Hymn of Meditation 145
The Sermon----Lenten Music:
"Mockery Or Love?"
The Sermon Prayer
*The Hymn of Response 158
*The Benediction
*The Threefold Amen
*The Postlude

*Congregation Stands

GENERAL ANNOUNCEMENTS

On Maundy Thursday March 30th at 7:30 PM, a Tenebra Service will be held in Christ Church. This is a special service dramatizing the suffering, death and burial of Jesus Christ. The service is open to both congregations.

CHRIST CHURCH ANNOUNCEMENTS

Anyone wishing to place lilies for Easter, please make your arrangements.

TRINITY CHURCH ANNOUNCEMENTS

March 21st Consistory Meeting at 7:30 PM.

Mid-Week Lenten Services will be at Carson Long Institute Chapel at 7:30 PM. A motion picture will be shown.

RITE OF CONFIRMATION NEXT WEEK TRINITY

MR. & MRS. WM. BORCHERDING ARE CELEBRATING THEIR 25 TH WEDDING ANNIVERSARY TODAY. THELMA & BILL CONGRATULATIONS.

ONE GREAT HOUR SHARING.

KINKORA 2:00 P.M. MEN

MEN WILL PAINT MON, TUES, WED.

MARK

Lenten Music:
"Mockery Or Love?"

Text: Mark 15:39 "The centurion who was standing in front of him, had seen how he had died, and he said, 'In truth this man was a Son of God.'"

"When I survey the wondrous cross on which the Prince of Glory died,
My richest gain I count but loss, and pour contempt on all my pride."

This is the first verse of that very old and very familiar lenten hymn. I am sure we have all sung it dozens of times. I am equally sure that too often we sing it as we do other hymns and never give a thought to what it means or what it is implying. The question to be asked is, "~~Do we~~ When we contemplate the cross of Christ, do we count our gains as losses, and do we indeed pour forth contempt for the self-pride in our lives?" I am sure that too often the answer must be that we are merely mouthing another pretty tune with pretty words and that is it.

This portion of lenten music is as all others, intended to move our spirits, our very souls, to change from the ordinary run of the mill Christians into red hot, fired up people of God. It should move us to the very depths of our beings, so that the cross becomes the banner under which we go forth for our Saviour. But is our singing and our songs mockery or love?

When Jesus was condemned to die he was taken out and nailed to the cross. He suffered the humility of a scourging at the hands of Pilate and his men. He was made sport of by the soldiers, and he was humiliated by making him carry the cross beam of his instrument of torture. Then when he hung there he was scoffed at and sneered at by the passersby as well as the witnesses. All of this was mockery. Mockery at this man because he was a threat to the authorities of the day. He was a nusiance. He was a thorn in the side of the Jewish

religious leaders and ~~so~~ he ~~must~~ HAD TO be done away with. ~~and do away with him~~ And so they did away with him, using trumped up charges against him, and accusing him of stirring up the people. Talk about not getting a fair trial. But he had no Civil Liberties Union to take his case to the supreme court. The supreme court of that day, THE SANHEDRIN had met in session and were responsible for his appearing before Pilate. The Sanhedrin had ruled that he must go. So he endured the mockery of a trial, the mockery of ridicule by the soldiers, and the mockery of those gathered around to see him suffering.

"See, from his head. his hands, his feet, Sorrow and love flow mingled down;
Did e'er such love and sorrow meet, or thorns compose so rich a crown?"

The death he endured was just as real, as the pain you and I experience when we are cut and bleed. His flesh was torn and hurt much like ours can become torn and hurt. ~~His blood flowed~~ The blood that flowed from his wounds, was just as red as ours. Recent Israeli diggings have unearthed a heel bone with a seven inch nail protruding from it. This should give us an idea of the agony that must have been endured by the person being executed.

The man who wrote When I Survey The Wondrous Cross, Isaac Watts, must have felt a very strong compunction to make the singer aware of the suffering and death of Christ. He writes not only in this hymn about it, but also IN THE HYMN Alas! and did My Saviour Bleed. In each of these hymns the suffering endured by Christ is evident.

He must have felt very strongly about singing hymns in general, for he lead the first protests against singing Psalms in church. When challeneged by his father who was a deacon of the church they attended, young Watts wrote a new hymn each Sunday for two years. This was at a time when the spiritual and moral life of the people was at a low ebb in England, this was during the early part of the 18th century. The sermons

of the time, never touched the social aspects of the Bible. The dissenters of that day were repressed and very often jailed for their dissent. To Isaac Watts belongs the distinction then of changing England from a Psalm singing worship, to singing hymns. He wrote not less than 600 hymns and many while he was still in his twenties. He was a minister and became an invalid in 1712 which was 5 years after he had written this hymn. He wrote this hymn at the age of 33. Some others we may recognize are, Our God, Our Help In Ages Past, Joy To The World, The Lord My Shepehrd Is, and Jesus Shall Reign Where'er The Sun. In our present hymnal there are 10 of his hymns.

But in each of his hymns can be felt a warmth, a feeling of, not mockery, but love. A devotion to God that is genuine and real. A love of the Saviour that can be felt through the words of each stanza.

"Forbid it Lord, that I should boast, Save in the death of Christ, My God;
All the vain things that charm me most, I sacrifice them to his blood."

In this the second verse, he points out that it is not for us to boast of what has happened. Instead we must accept it inhumility and sacrifice the things of this world that would keep us from this love of Christ. We are reminded by these words to make ourselves worthy of the love shown by Christ.

At this time of the year we talk of the words of Christ and how he tells us of that greater love, and the story is told, (Illustration of Sailors on Ship sinking and one giving life)

Here again we see and are reminded of "Greater love has no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends." This Jesus did, out of love. He did not mock his fate and say, "Why me?" He did not make a mockery of the ordeal he went through. He accepted it in love and obedience.

"Were the whole realm of nature mine, That were a present far too small

Love so amazing, so divine, Demands my soul, my life, my all."

With these words Mr. Watts concludes this moving and beautiful hymn. Father ~~Xxxxx~~ Ignatius of St. Edmunds church in England after this hymn was sung, supposedly repeated the last lines, "Love so amazing, ~~so~~ divine, Demands my soul, my life, my all, and after a period silence remarked, "I am surprised to hear you sing that. Do you know that altogether you put only fifteen shillings in the collection plate?"

However humorous this may be, it should be a reflection not only upon our giving, but of the giving of ourselves. ~~Xxxxxx~~ Are we really willing to give our all to God in exchange for what he did for us.? Again are we involved in mockery, or are we involved in love?

The centurion who stood at the cross saw something there, that must have been missed by most of the others. At least, he is the only one to make such a remark about it. He made the humble confession, ~~XXXXX~~ "In truth this man was a Son of God." He must have seen that this last act of this tortured and pain wracked individual was an act of love. He must have seen that in spite of the scorn and the mockery that he endured, he did not come out a loser, but as a winner. That even in death he had won.

Shouldn't love such as this really demand all that we have? Shouldn't this very act by someone who didn't deserve what he got, really move us to re-dedicate ourselves and our lives to Him? I think it should, and I also think that we should show this love and re-dedication in changed lives. We should show it in more love to our fellowman and in more love to God and more love toward his church. This is what Lenten Music should do for each of us, this season.

"Were the whole realm of nature mine, O dear God, that would be a present far too small for you. Love so mazing, so divine, demands my soul, my life, my all.




SEP 56







Ralph C. Link
153 Keck Road
Sarver, Pa. 16055
(412) 352-1103

Born: April 9, 1929, Pittsburgh, Pa.
Married: December 15, 1951
Wife: Shirley Margaret Neill
Born: December 8, 1930, Pittsburgh, Pa.

Children: Ralph Dale Link, born May 11, 1955, Pittsburgh, Pa.
Lloyd Alan Link, born May 28, 1958, Pittsburgh, Pa.
Nancy Lynn Link, born March 15, 1961, Butler, Pa.

SCHOOLING:

Graduated from Perry High School, Pittsburgh, Pa. June 1947

Lay Ministry School, Penn West Conference of United Church of Christ, September 1965 to May 1969

Commissioned Lay Minister June 1969

Lancaster Theological Seminary, Lancaster, Pa., September 1970

Graduated from Lancaster Theological Seminary May 1974

Ordained to Christian Ministry March 10, 1974

PASTORATES:

As Lay Minister: short term, 1 month or less in various churches 1965 to 1967

Emlenton Lamartine Charge of United Church of Christ 1967 to 1969

Short term in various churches 1970 until Seminary entrance July 1970

July 1970 to December 1973 Student Pastor at Trinity Charge, New Bloomfield, Duncannon, Pa., Penn Central Conference, United Church of Christ

December 1973 to present, St. Paul's United Church of Christ, Butler, Pa., Penn West Conference, United Church of Christ

PERSONAL TESTIMONY

OF

Ralph C. Link

I am the youngest of five children. I was born just prior to the onset of the Depression. Our family was very poor. My father was an alcoholic and my mother was a very religious person who was searching for the Lord. During my childhood she did her best to teach me the things of the Lord. Later in life she came to a personal relationship with Him.

I grew up in the Evangelical and Reformed Church where salvation by grace alone was not preached nor taught. I knew all about Jesus, what He did, how He lived, His miracles, His death and resurrection, but I didn't know Him personally.

My life had many ups and downs and all the while I was attending church and striving with my good works to please God. At a very low point in my life when we were deeply in debt and my wife and three children were all ill, I came to the crossroads. I watched a Billy Graham Crusade on television from some distant city and the message he preached seemed to be directed right at me. I wrestled with making that commitment to Christ, but didn't. The next afternoon and evening at work on the 4 to 12 shift I came to the conclusion that I needed to make that commitment to Christ. It seemed like there was no other choice if life was to have any meaning. That night when I came home from work at 1:00 A.M., I laid face down on the living room floor and told God that I couldn't live my life in my own strength and I accepted the gift of salvation from my Savior Jesus Christ. My life has never been the same.

Through several meaningful circumstances I was called by God to serve Him in the Christian Ministry and to help spread that wonderful message of salvation through the shed blood of Jesus Christ. What a wonderful and rewarding time it has been and I give Him all the praise for my salvation and the opportunity to serve Him.

STATEMENT OF FAITH

OF

Ralph C. Link

I believe the Bible, both the Old and New Testaments to be the inspired inerrant Word of God. I believe the Bible is the complete revelation of His will for the salvation of men and it is the final authority for the Christian faith and life.

I believe in one God, who is eternally existent in three persons: Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

I believe in the Diety of the Lord Jesus Christ that He is true God and true man. I believe that He was born of the Virgin Mary, that He lived in sinless life, that He performed the miracles recorded in Scripture, that He died on the cross as a sacrifice for our sins, that He bodily arose from the dead, that He ascended on high where He is at the right had of Almighty God as our intercessor.

I believe in the Holy Spirit and that He comes and indwells each believer at the time of conversion. I believe that He lives in each believer to lead, to instruct, and to convict so that a believe may live a more godly life.

I believe that through the shed blood of Jesus Christ and through His resurrection, this is the only ground for justification and salvation for all who receive Him A Lord and Savior and to such as receive Him, they are born of the Holy Spirit and become children of God.

I believe water baptism and the Lord's Supper are ordinances of the Church but are not means of salvation.

I believe in the personal and premillennial and imminent coming of the Lord Jesus Christ.

I believe in the resurrection of the dead, for the believer to resurrection of life and joy with the Lord, for the unbeliever to resurrection of judgement and everlasting punishment.